



OPEN LETTER

To:

President of the European Council -Charles Michel

President of the European Commission – Ursula Von Der Leyen

Dear President Michel and President Von Der Leyen,

I am writing to you on behalf of PAK to share our concern about ongoing political crimes and the constant violation of human rights in Turkey and would like to have your attention on these matters.

The already strained political situation in Turkey worsened when President Erdogan replaced the elected parliament system with an authoritarian presidentship, by means of an unholy alliance with the extreme-nationalist party MHP through the so-called "Cumhur Ittifaki".

Every day we receive alarming reports from Turkey on how they dismiss people, imprison political opponents, abolish arbitrary political immunity for parliamentarians, officials and elected Kurdish local councillors and replace them with unelected administrators who are pro-government. This has been the case in Turkey for a long time. With these actions, they want to scare politicians into not participating in the struggle for democracy in the country and solve the Kurdish status.

The judicial system and the state administration are completely politicized. People who use social media which has not been approved by the president are persecuted. According to a report by the International Crisis Group, thousands of people have lost their lives during the presidency. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have criticised the violence in Turkey, especially against the Kurds, and called on the country to investigate allegations of human rights violations.

Since 2016, several elected politicians have been imprisoned, including the leaders of the opposition party HDP (People's Democratic Party), Figen Yüksekdağ, and Selahattin Demirtaş. Recently, in the Selahattin Demirtaş case, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey's action "seeks to stifle pluralism and restrict free political debate". The court also found no clear link between Demirtaş' speech and terrorist propaganda, incitement to crime, and participation in illegal meetings and demonstrations. In light of the above, the European Court of Human Rights demands that Turkey take the necessary measures immediately and release Demirtaş.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that “the decision of the European Court of Justice is purely political” and has condemned the decision. In a speech to the AK Party in parliament, Erdogan said the verdict defended a "terrorist" and that only Turkish courts could decide the Demirtas case.

Freedom of the press and freedom of speech are the fundamental foundations of democracy. The negative and unacceptable development in Turkey has been going on for many years, but now seems to be accelerating. During the Corona crisis, the Turkish media which are loyal to the regime, have restricted democracy and freedom of the press and expression by constantly attacking dissidents, not only those in the country but also in other countries.

The Administrative Court threatens to ban Kurdish political parties with party names containing the word "Kurd" or "Kurdistan". These parties are legal and have participated in the local elections according to the current election rules. These parties stand for diversity, solidarity, and tolerance in society. One of these parties is the Kurdistan Freedom Party PAK, which has functioned legally with its political activities.

Turkey's recent military operations in the Caucasus, Libya and the Mediterranean are worrying. In the Caucasus, instead of mediating peace between two rival ethnic groups, (Armenians and Azerbaijanis) they have supported some and encouraged persecution of ethnic groups. With its active provocation of war and active participation, it promoted regular war with unacceptable consequences. In Libya, on the other hand, activists are participating in a civil war and provoking new ones. In front of the whole world, jihadists who are trained and equipped in Turkey with NATO and EU weapons were brought in. All these, to destabilize the area and in the hope of obtaining agreements on gas and oil deposits in a cruel way.

Exploration for oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean outside of its territorial waters is another act that shows Erdogan's aggression against his neighbours and disrespect of international conventions on the law of the sea that regulate coexistence and peace between countries.

Turkey's offence in western Kurdistan (Rojava), northern Syria against civilians, children, women, and the elderly, violated international law and led to many deaths. Turkey's repeated attacks on the Kurds in southern Kurdistan with weapons purchased from EU countries, including Germany, are unacceptable.

Turkey's aggressive domestic and foreign policies have brought the country's balance to the brink of chaos. In order to stay in power, Turkey's current government party constrain democratic forces, writers, political parties, the opposition in the country, and prevent the whole free world from getting involved in what is happening in the country.

We, the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), our sympathisers and supporters in Europe support all international conventions. Erdogan must accept the rule of law without any conditions, especially the right of the Kurdish people to practise their rights. We support the ruling of the European Court of Justice that all political prisoners be released immediately in accordance with the requirements of the European Court of Human Rights.

Honourable Presidents!

Erdoğan's actions are unacceptable and in violation of democracy and all conventions.

We kindly ask you, as President of the European Council and President of European Commission, the following.

- to take immediate action against Erdogan's movement in Turkey and its immediate territories, which incite war and unrest.
- to protect and defend the rights of the Kurds!
- to stop selling weapons to Turkey, demand an immediate arms embargo against Turkey from all EU countries!
- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan must respect the will of the electorate and return power to the elected mayors.
- Turkey must sign the agreement on the autonomy of regional authorities and Implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Turkish state must recognize the existence of the Kurdish people in the constitution and all its laws, and Kurdish must become the language of education and the official language.
- There must be an end to the pro-government media hype against elected representatives. We can never accept that elected politicians are being subjected to harassment or threats!
- Demand that Turkey abide by EHRC's decision and release all political prisoners immediately!

Yours Faithfully

Seval MERT

Chairman

*The European support committee for
Kurdistan Freedom Party*